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Deleting word dyke from column stirs up controversy on campus

Language inappropriate, newsletter editor says

Associated Press

GREELEY — A controversy is brewing over a university newsletter editor's decision to delete the word "dyke" from the name of a column that advertises a monthly luncheon for lesbians.

University of Northern Colorado spokesman Ken McConnellogue said Thursday that editor Lori Rapp eliminated the word from the column title, "Dining With Dykes," but printed information about the monthly luncheon in The UNC Report.

The internal newsletter circulates to university faculty and staff, and is produced by University News and Publications.

"We made an editorial decision that that language wasn't appropriate for readers," McConnellogue said. "I think it's important to keep in mind it's not so much the intent of a term as the impact."

But Melanie Wilson, director of the Women's Resource Center, which sponsors the luncheon, said lesbians use the word in an effort to take away its negative connotation.

"Clearly, the people on the right side of the political spectrum have used words like this for negative purposes, and now we want to use it in a positive way," Wilson said.

She said the word is used widely in academic fields, such as women's and gay studies, and pointed out that the column title has been published in The Mirror, the UNC student newspaper; and the Museletter, which is published by the center.

McConnellogue said no official complaints had been filed at the university's affirmative action and equal opportunity office, but more than 40 people have complained about the center's use of the word.

Wilson said the callers contend the term violates UNC's discrimination and sex harassment policy.

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